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KRVN - Gudmundsen Field Day

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KRVN - Gudmundsen Field Day - April 26, 2008

1. John, the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources has various locations throughout Nebraska for research and educational purposes. One such location is the Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory, which this past week was the site for the annual Youth Field Day.

Yes, it was. The Gudmundsen ranch, in the heart of the Sandhills near Whitman, was donated to the University of Nebraska Foundation in 1978 by Elmer "Pete" and Abbie Gudmundsen. In 1981, the University of Nebraska–Lincoln began leasing the ranch for projects that include livestock, soil, veterinary medicine, economics, entomology, geology, hydrology, forestry and wildlife. Facilities at Gudmundsen now include our wonderful Wagonhammer Education Center with its Ray Bohy Conference Room, which can accommodate groups of up to 300 people. Just this past week those facilities were put to very good use!

2. I understand around 150 high school youth were at Gudmundsen last Wednesday for the annual Youth Field Day. One purpose of the event is to underscore agriculture's importance in Nebraska and to explain career options to students that they might otherwise not consider.

That's right. Throughout the day, UNL faculty and others presented 15-minute sessions on topics relating in some way to agricultural studies, ranging from forensic science to Sandhills hydrology to using native plants in the landscape. Students hear the history of Gudmundsen, as well as the importance of agriculture in our state –

nearly one in three jobs in Nebraska is connected to agriculture in some way. Students hear about opportunities available for them to study in our College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources in Lincoln and the College of Technical Agriculture at Curtis. We invite these students to come talk to us at any time.

3. John, I imagine even after the Gudmundsen Youth Field Day students can keep learning from it, whether or not the students have a background in agriculture.

That's right. The science and ag instructors who take their students to the field day like to ensure their students retain what they've learned. At least one instructor has his students take field notes, which the students can later use in a quiz. And as topics come up later in the classroom, students and instructors will comment on how those topics relate to those at the field day. Students rank the field day very high, and those coming from area ranches often learn ideas to improve operations. Students not from an agricultural background also find new possibilities for them to consider studying and as possible careers. Former student participants of the field day now are teaching vocational agriculture or science, and are eager to bring their students to the event as a valuable teaching tool.

The annual Youth Field Day at the Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory – another of the many ways your Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources is 'at work for Nebraska.'